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# *American Anarchism: What It Is & What It Is Not*

## *Joseph Labadie's Effort To Define It*

**By Carlotta Anderson**

## A PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

Anarchism assumes "that what one produces would belong to himself, and that no individual or collection of persons, be they outlaw or state, should take any portion of it without his knowledge or consent; that every person should be allowed to exchange his own products wherever he wills; that he should be allowed to co-operate with his fellows if he chooses, or to compete against them in whatever fields he elects; that no restrictions whatsoever should be put upon him in what he prints or reads or drinks or eats or does, so long as he does not invade the equal rights of his fellows."

Joseph A. Labadie

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Joseph A. Labadie
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# American Anarchism:

## What It Is & What It Is Not

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## Joseph Labadie's Effort To Define It

By Carlotta Anderson

ANARCHISM was a new concept for Americans of the 1880s, one that many came to dread and revile. The arrival on American shores in 1883 of the German revolutionary Johann Most, who called for the violent overthrow of existing states, triggered a horror of the word "anarchist," linking it in public perceptions with terrorist tactics and "propaganda of the deed." Three years later, a bomb was thrown at police in Haymarket Square during an otherwise peaceful demonstration organized by Chicago anarchists and police opened fire. Eight policemen were killed in the carnage and sixty wounded, plus an un-

told number of civilians. "The Anarchist" was commonly depicted in newspaper graphics as a bearded, crazed fanatic armed with dynamite and revolver.

No matter that the bomb-thrower was never identified. In the popular press, anarchists were viewed as vicious, degenerate foreigners, hell-bent on terrorism and destruction of the American society. Even after four of the Chicago anarchists died on the scaffold, the country remained convulsed by its first Red Scare.

It was to counteract the widespread hatred and ignorance of anarchism that Detroit labor leader and printer Joseph A. Labadie resolved in 1888 to launch what today would be called a public relations campaign. He had proclaimed his conversion to individualist anarchism five years earlier, at the age of 33, after establishing himself as a prominent labor organizer, socialist, Greenbacker and journalist. Born in Paw Paw, Michigan, he claimed to be the state's first native-born anarchist.

An experienced propagandist, Labadie

intended to widely proclaim the principles and methods of America's anarchists and show that they were not monsters. He also hoped to bring about harmony between the individualist branch, which counted Thoreau and Emerson among its forebears and advocated peaceful measures, and the communist anarchists, who were primarily foreign born and did not rule out violence, and to create some sort of cohesive movement analagous to his labor organizing efforts.[1]

In the climate after Haymarket, few Americans were likely to have been searching for an objective outline of anarchist philosophy, but there was, in any case, none available. While writings by individual exponents — both foreign and home-grown — existed, there was no anthology of anarchist thought, no systematic study of the different schools, and especially no book summing up the beliefs as they were evolving in the United States. There was Benjamin Tucker's periodical **Liberty**, representing the individualist outlook, but it tended to focus on arcane controversies and would

not have provided a clear overview to the general reader.[2]

In wanting to show the average person that America's anarchists were "well-behaved, honest, just," and "a good deal like other folks," Labadie set himself a daunting task. It was only a few decades since the Frenchman Pierre-Joseph Proudhon had apparently been the first to call himself an anarchist, although anti-statist concepts were uttered by the Chinese sage Lao-tse nearly 2400 years earlier, and by the Greek Stoic, Zeno, around 300 B.C. But for several hundred years at least, the idea of anarchy (from the Greek, meaning without a chief), its principles and its proponents had been deplored and despised. John Milton equated Chaos with anarchy in **Paradise Lost**; Thomas Carlyle termed anarchy "the hatefullest of things;" Edmund Burke wrote of "the barbarous anarchik despotism of Turkey;" and Sir Richard Steele claimed "the Licentious are in a State of barbarous Anarchy," among the many who damned it.[3]

But Labadie trusted in the essential rat-

ionality of the human mind. He operated on a naive faith that if anarchists could present the true nature of their doctrine to ordinary people, they could stop "the hoodlums of the press and pulpit" from laying every outrage at their doors. Once people saw how logical, just and non-threatening anarchism was, and how decent its exponents were, he believed, they would want to examine the subject further. To achieve this goal, he proposed that anarchists assemble for the purpose of publicly issuing an "Anarchistic manifesto" which would serve to "give definiteness to our movement."[4]

At no time was Labadie willing to call the doctrine libertarianism in order to make it more inoffensive. Sometimes he used the term "philosophical" anarchism just so the word wouldn't "strike the puny mind with so much force as to knock it out in the first round," but he thought that redundant, like saying "philosophical philosophy."[5]

Labadie's personal experiences in Detroit had done much to convince him that the public could be brought around by sweet

reasonableness. A man of immense personal charm and amiability, he was widely known and admired as a prime mover in many of Michigan's labor bodies and a fighter in the major social reform movements of the time. He was a pioneer organizer of the Knights of Labor in 1878 and the Detroit Trades Council in 1880, a candidate for mayor on the Greenback-Labor ticket in 1878, an official of the Socialist Labor Party and an influential member of the local typographical union, while publishing, editing or contributing to labor papers in the state and elsewhere.

Handsome, debonair, well-dressed and well-groomed, sporting a Buffalo Bill style goatee and slouch hat, Jo, as he was called, was commonly referred to as Detroit's "gentle anarchist." Although he proclaimed at every opportunity his conviction that "the goal of human civilization is philosophical anarchy," and that "the best laws, the safest laws, and . . . the only laws necessary for the guidance of human action are natural laws," his dissident ideas did not diminish

his popularity. There were only a few others in Detroit who flirted with the doctrine, almost all of them Germans. As a result, the radical-baiting panic that the Haymarket bombing set off elsewhere scarcely ruffled the city's calm. In the weeks after the executions, the **Detroit Tribune** sanguinely predicted "No Trouble Likely Here" and described Labadie as "an easy going fellow . . . In his soft, persuasive tones he preaches his theory to men who can't help admiring his ability."[6]

Although not attacked or reviled in his native state, Labadie had been a delegate to the 1887 Knights of Labor convention in Minneapolis and heard its leader, Terence Powderly, lash out: "for anarchy I have nothing but hatred, and if I could I would forever wipe from the face of the earth the last vestage of its double-damned presence." Powderly went on to accuse anarchists of driving men from the labor movement "by their wild and foolish mouthings wherever they congregate, and they usually congregate where beer flows freely. . ."[7]

In a misguided attempt to save the Knights of Labor from the Haymarket backlash, Powderly refused to support clemency for the condemned men. He went so far as declaring that it would be better "that seven times seven men hang than to hang the millstone of odium around the standard of this Order in affiliating in any way with this element of destruction."[8]

Infuriated and disgusted, Labadie branded Powderly a "poltroon," dropped out of the Knights, and founded the Michigan Federation of Labor in its place. At the same time, he resolved to transform the popular view of anarchists as "an ignorant, vicious, whisky-drinking gang, dirty in personal habits, careless of the rights of others, and ever ready to kill and burn."[9]

He first proposed a general conference of anarchists to be held in Detroit in the summer of 1888. Its purpose would be to draw up a declaration of principles and methods which might serve to counteract the malicious accusations. As Labadie envisioned it in his "Cranky Notions" column in **Lib-**

erty, it would be well covered by the press and attract widespread attention. Editor Tucker, however, pooh-poohed the idea as an expensive junket unless "anybody has any important and well-digested proposals upon which the conference could act advantageously." He also thought Labadie "surprisingly ignorant of the nature of the beast known as a capitalistic newspaper" if he thought issuing a declaration of principles would stop the misrepresentation of anarchists.[10]

The conference idea fell through. Unflagging in his determination to promulgate anarchist philosophy, Labadie conceived a new project. He would ask the country's leading anarchists to send him their views of what anarchism is, why it is desirable, and whether it should be attained by violence, political action, education or some other means. They were also to send a biographical sketch and a picture.[11]

Labadie hoped to publish the compiled material in booklet form and approached Tucker with the proposal. The Boston pub-

lisher had issued a good number of anarchist writings, and Labadie was one of his closest associates and friends. Yet Tucker responded that he would help sell such a book and would like to undertake its publication, "but I really cannot do it," offering no other explanation.[12]

Labadie's plan was to put together a theoretical framework of anarchism, to present the essence of the philosophy by consensus of those who had adopted it. In late 1888 and early 1889, he sent out forty or fifty letters in the hope that the nation's anarchists would cooperate. Almost all were of the individualist persuasion. The grand scheme did not come to fruition, however. Only 15 appear to have sent useful material.

In evaluating their lack of cooperation, it might be pointed out that their philosophical forefather, Josiah Warren, warned that the only way man could know liberty was by shunning "combinations" with others. This skepticism about institutions, Frank Brooks has pointed out, resulted in a lack of consensus on strategy and a failure to

form any substantial organization that might have advanced the individualist philosophy. Many of those Labadie contacted found some aspect to complain or quibble about and determining the group ethos proved trickier than he had anticipated. "I had to do some considerable coaxing before I made much headway," he acknowledged.[13]

A female anarchist felt the plan was not worth the trouble. "Do you care for the opinions of the average man and woman? I do not," she sniffed. Another woman rebuffed Labadie because "I fear no one will be the wiser on the subject of Anarchy for reading the testimonials of good behavior that we may be pleased to give ourselves."

Charles T. Fowler, an associate of Ezra Heywood, disciple of the father of American individualist anarchism, Josiah Warren, and publisher of **The Sun**, a Kansas City, Missouri, anarchist periodical, wrote that he had "no ...nostrums outside of nature" and believed anarchism would come about naturally, presumably without requiring the publicity Labadie was proposing.[14]

some 45 years to the cause of land reform. It was he who contributed to anarchist thought the occupancy-and-use concept of land. This held that land, as the common heritage of all mankind, should not be owned outright but only be in temporary possession of an individual who was occupying and using it. Now over seventy, he confessed wearily that he had been identified with so many "societies, orders, sects and parties, and to so little purpose, that I am tired of organizations. . . . Have we not enough of isms?"[19] (Full letter pp 28-30).

Most of those Labadie contacted belonged to the individualist school and were contributors to **Liberty.** They agreed with Ingalls that the use of force would bring not anarchism, but greater despotic power. They imagined instead an evolutionary development of the human mind and society which would come about through education and other peaceable means. "When the larva is ready to become perfect the case splits," as J. William Lloyd described the unfolding.[20]

At least five were labor activists. Professionly, they ranged from Buffalo, New York, laborer Augustine Leroy Ballou, who had "never met a single soul outside of my own family who sympathized with my belief" to New York City architect John Beverly Robinson, educated at Columbia University, later a professor at Washington University in St. Louis, and author of treatises on architectural composition as well as anarchist works.[21]

Almost all described themselves as agnostics or free-thinkers, although Ingalls had once been a Quaker minister and Fowler was a dissident Unitarian preacher. In an era when social reformers targeted alcohol as the demon of the working class, several thought it pertinent to offer that they were "temperate" or abstainers.

While none presented anarchism as a doctrine of revolutionary force, several foresaw revolution as an inevitable precursor of its establishment. Marie Louise (David), a French-born agitator who sat with Karl Marx at the General Council of the Inter-

national Working Men's Association before converting to anarchism, did not think anarchy could be established through brutal means, and predicted floridly that brutality would "devour its own brood before moral means and Anarchy can sway their sceptre of Bliss."[22]

British-born William T. Holmes, who hid fugitive Chicago anarchist Albert Parsons at his home in Geneva, Illinois, for several days after the Haymarket bombing, and was threatened by local townspeople with mob violence, made the distinction between revolutionary views, having to do with destruction, and "constructionist" views, which pertained to the system which would replace the existing one. He did not rule out violence in the revolutionary phase. Anarchy, he held, could not result until the revolution —peaceable or otherwise— was accomplished. He described the eventual state of anarchy as peace, order, local self-government, opposed in principle to force of every kind.[23]

Holmes was one of the few Labadie con-

tacted who had ties to communist, or collectivist, anarchism, a doctrine subscribed to in the United States primarily by the foreign-born. As formulated by Peter Kropotkin, it envisioned a stateless system of communes in which the people owned the means of production in common. They would be rewarded not as a result of free competition, as the individualists would have it, but "To each according to his needs, from each according to his ability." The notorious Johann Most and the Chicago anarchists associated with the Haymarket affair espoused this doctrine and many advocated violent tactics to achieve it. Tucker reviled the communist anarchists as authoritarians and referred to them either as communists or "anarchists" in quotes. In his view, anarchism and communism contradicted each other, and in the derisive fashion he relished, he publicly called Holmes an ignoramus."[24]

Labadie opposed communist anarchism because it denied the right of private ownership "of the results of one's own efforts" (which did not include land). However, he

and Holmes had reached a meeting of the minds. They agreed that no principle of anarchism denied the right of free contract, and thus the right to contract with others to live communistically. Labadie concluded that anarchy "admits of any kind of organization, so long as membership is not compulsory." No one should object to persons "being ruled by a despot, if they so wish," so long as they didn't force others to do likewise.[25]

Holmes sent Labadie a moving biographical sketch. In it he characterized himself as "an eternal rebel against the awful crimes committed against humanity by the rich and powerful." He wrote of the poverty of his youth, of the three periods in his life when "I have had to drink the very dregs of destitution and want, through no fault of my own," and how he hated, "with all the intensity of my being, a system which breeds tramps, homeless waifs and all the evils of poverty."[26]

Labadie also received replies from physician Marx Edgeworth Lazarus, who wrote for

anarchist papers under the pseudonym "Edgeworth," and held that Jesus was the first anarchist; Edwin C. Walker, publisher of **Fair Play** in Valley Falls, Kansas, who had been jailed along with Moses Harman's 16-year-old daughter, Lillian, for violating Kansas laws regarding cohabitation; Alfred B. Westrup, a money reformer from Chicago, and Dyer D. Lum, who had taken over editorship of Parson's journal, **The Alarm**, in Chicago, after Parson's arrest.

Anyone perusing the contributions for specifics of how anarchism would work in practice would be disappointed. For these visionaries, it was enough to promote the ideal. Mapping out an anarchist society was, in any case, a contradiction in terms. Once people were free, they would work out a new society in accordance with natural laws. To systematize it in advance would be imposing a structure, not liberty at all.

Anarchism was, in addition, a negative philosophy: no government, no laws, no taxes, no restrictions on money or trade, no compulsory education, no state-supported

produces would belong to himself, and that no individual or collection of persons, be they outlaw or state, should take any portion of it without his knowledge or consent; that every person should be allowed to exchange his own products wherever he wills; that he should be allowed to co-operate with his fellows if he chooses, or to compete against them in whatever fields he elects; that no restrictions whatsoever should be put upon him in what he prints or reads or drinks or eats or does, so long as he does not invade the equal rights of his fellows."

Labadie briefly summarized the precepts of this philosophy:

□ since crime is the doing of injury to another by aggression, no one who commits a crime can be an anarchist (Tucker and Voltairine de Cleyre objected that an anarchist is identified by his beliefs, not his conduct);[28]

□ no one can kill another, except in self-defense, because that would be an invasion of another's equal right to live;

□ occupancy and use would be the sole

claim to land;

□ anyone would be permitted to issue money as a medium of exchange;

□ all monopolies established by law, such as patent and copyright, would be abolished;

□ all taxation would be voluntary, as with churches, trade unions, etc.

He concluded that freedom in every walk of life would elevate the human race to greater happiness.

Labadie, though not a seminal anarchist thinker, played a significant role in efforts to publicize American individualist anarchism. Undeterred by the failure of his plan to publish a booklet on the subject, he tirelessly lectured, debated, pamphleteered and churned out a steady flow of "Cranky Notions" columns and letters to the editor, which were printed in the mainstream as well as the radical press. His revolutionary poems also were widely printed.

Persistently and reasonably espousing the benefits of no government at every street corner, so to speak, Labadie almost gave anarchism a good name in Detroit. "In his

kindly humorous way he probably broke down more prejudice against the word "anarchist" than can ever be estimated," wrote Agnes Inglis, curator of the Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan for 28 years, and herself an anarchist.[29] Only his death in 1933 stilled Labadie's efforts.

One assumes Labadie would have been dismayed and disheartened to learn that more than 100 years after his attempt to enlighten the public by presenting a dispassionate compilation of anarchist thought, the word still conjures up a fearsome stereotype and there is probably no greater understanding of its idealistic tenets. Today, as historian Paul Avrich has noted, "the association of anarchism with terrorism, with bombs, dynamite, and chaos, remains deeply imbedded in the popular imagination." Anarchism is subject to the grossest misunderstandings of its nature and objectives," just as it was in Labadie's day.[30]

## THE AUTHOR

Carlotta R. Anderson is Labadie's granddaughter. Her biography, **All-American Anarchist: Joseph A. Labadie and the Labor Movement**, was published by Wayne State University Press in July, 1998. Anyone interested in more information about the subject of this article, including biographical details of the anarchists represented, may reach her through this magazine or by e-mail at: CarlottaRA@aol.com. She has also set up a Joseph Labadie website with a selection of essays and poems by him at: http://members.aol.com/labadiejo.

### NOTES

LC = Labadie Collection, Special Collections Library, University of Michigan.

JL/CN = Joseph Labadie, "Cranky Notions" column in **Liberty.**

1. Joseph A. Labadie, "Cranky Notions," **Liberty,** February 25, April 14, December 15, 1888.

2. Only two books published in the United States by then even suggested in their titles a general treatment of the subject: **Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Scientific Basis as Defined by Some of Its Apostles,** a collection of the writings of Albert Parsons and others, representing the school of communist anarchism,

issued posthumously by Parson's wife, Lucy, in 1887; and **Anarchy and Anarchists,** by Chicago police captain Michael J. Schaak, who indiscriminately rounded up and jailed hundreds of radicals after the Haymarket bombing.

3. JL/CN, June 8, 1889; **Oxford English Dictionary,** 1971 edition.

4. JL/CN, December 15, 1888.

5. Ibid, August 13, 1892.

6. Ladadie, **Lansing Sentinel,** November 20, 1884; JL/CN, December 15, 1888; "The Local Anarchists," **Detroit Tribune,** December 7, 1887, Labadie Scrapbook I, 49, LC.

7. Terence V. Powderly, **Thirty Years of Labor** (Columbus: Excelsior Publishing House, 1889), 551,554.

8. Ibid, 552.

9. Labadie, letter to anarchists beginning, "The subject of Anarchy is very much misunderstood...." March 16, 1889, LC. Some letters must have been mailed earlier judging from the dates of the responses.

10. **Liberty,** February 25, December 15, 1888.

11. Labadie, letter to anarchists.

12. Benjamin R. Tucker to Labadie, August 12, 1888,LC.

13. Frank Brooks, "American individualist anarchism: what it was and why it failed," **Journal of Political Ideologies** (1996) 1 (1), 86-87; JL/CN, June 8, 1889. For information on many of the anarchists Labadie surveyed see James J. Martin, **Men Against the State** (Colorado Springs: Ralph Myles Publisher, Inc., 1970.)

14. JL/CN, June 8, 1889; Charles T. Fowler to Labadie, n.d., LC.

15. E.W. Barber to Labadie, March 19, 1889, LC.

16. George A. Schilling to Labadie, January 25, 1889, LC.

17. Maurice A. Bachman (Moritz A. Bachmann) to Labadie, n.d., LC.

18. Archibald H. Simpson to Labadie, January 20, 1889, LC.

19. Joshua K. Ingalls to Labadie, March 25, 1889 LC.

20. J. William Lloyd to Labadie, n.d. [1889], LC.

21. Augustine Leroy Ballou to Labadie, March 22, 1889, LC.
22. Marie Louise David to Labadie, April, 1889, LC.
23. William T. Holmes to Labadie, April 7, 1889, LC; Paul Avrich, **The Haymarket Tragedy** (Princeton University Press, 1984), 105. In 1896 Holmes published **The Historical, Philosophical and Economical Bases of Anarchy** (Columbus Junction, Iowa, E.H. Fulton, 1896), a 75-page booklet about anarchism's American roots.
24. **Liberty,** February 25, 1888.
25. JL/CN, January 28, April 14, 1888.
26. Holmes to Labadie, April 7, 1889.
27. Tucker to Labadie, December 20, 1891, LC; Labadie, "Anarchism: What It Is and What It Is Not" (Detroit: The International Anarchist Group of Detroit, n.d. [1908?], reprinted in **the dandelion,** 3 (12), Winter, 1979. An anarchist conference such as Labadie had envisioned was finally held in Chicago in 1893. Organized by William Holmes, it aimed to produce a program acceptable to all the anarchist groups. However, both Tucker and Johann Most refused to attend because they believed the other's views on property were incompatible with anarchist principles. Paul Avrich, **An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre** (Princeton University Press, 1978), 152.
28. Tucker to Labadie, May 4, 1908; Voltairine de Cleyre, May 11, 1908, LC. Labadie later conceded the point, writing that when an anarchist "violates the law of equal freedom" it is an act contrary to his general principles similar to Christians violating the principles of Jesus Christ. Labadie, "Anarchism" (Detroit: The Labadie Shop, 1932).
29. Agnes Inglis, "Charles Joseph Antoine Labadie," three-page typescript, n.d., LC.
30. Avrich, **An American Anarchist,** xiii-xiv.

Glenora, N.Y. March 25, 1889
Joseph A. Labadie:

Dear Sir:

Yours of 15th inst is recd. In answer I send a copy of *Social Science* with portrait, also Photo — minus cap and specs, which friends say is necessary to complete recognition. S.S. contains Biog-Sketch. I send you also copy of *Economic Equities* in the closing pages of which you will find my views of promoting reform by violence.

As to my views of Anarchy they are not well defined to myself. I deplore the "strife among brethern" which wastes the strength of advanced thinkers, to elevate unimportant distinctions. Within the last sixty years, beginning with my teens, I have been identified with a great number of societies, orders, sects and parties, and to so little purpose, that I am tired of organizations, and distinctive schools of thought. Have we not had enough of isms? Leaders become despots, and every movement seems to become the mere creature of a single mind: e.g. *Comtism, Marxism, Proudhonism, Georgism.*

The State, however far from being indispensible, seems to me inevitable, until general intelligence and the apprehension of the great good of mutual freedom, gives perfect hospitality to the

thoughts and aims of others. To attempt the abolition of the State, by violence, would be not simply an inauguration of the bugbear, anarchy, so vulgarly and stupidly feared, but of a new State with a wider base and greater despotic power than the one to be overborne. Anarchy in any philosophical sense can hold no relation to forceful methods and compulsory processes, except as they are strictly "in defence"; whenever it becomes aggressive, it becomes archic, necessarily. How far purely defensive measures may justify combinations is a matter requiring very nice distinctions, since engines set for defence may be readily reversed and turned to do the work of invasion and of despotic rule. Non-resistance courageously persistent were preferable to phrensied rebellion, whose defeat is almost certain, and whose triumph would entail evils of equal magnitude with those thought to be intolerable.

In political action I have no faith. The honest worker plays politics against professionals, who use "loaded dice," or "stack the cards". His safety lies in eschewing voting, and thereby not becoming a party to his own subjection.

Education of the schools and colleges will do little to bring anarchy or any measure of progress. Education (comes) through scientific methods and painful experience. Our State, our

Church, our orders and societies, of whatever kind exist for the sole purpose of glorifying their organization and perpetuating its power. The individual, alone, working for his own highest good, promotes the universal, remedying many of the wrongs which organized bodies inflict.

But individuals are socially related, and in true freedom unite for mutual help and enjoyment. That form of government or of no government, of society organized or amorphous, I deem the best, which begets the largest liberty and secures the fullest reciprocation. Whether I meet the requirements of the severe school of philosophical Anarchists is not a matter of consequence to me or to the world. I have no ambition now to wear the badge of any party or repeat the shibboleth of any sect.

Respectfully etc.
J.K. Ingalls

It may be customary for parties sending permission to publish portraits and biographical sketch to contribute to that end. I do not feel able to do so but if you can use to advantage some of my books and pamphlets, I will willingly present you with some of them, and mail them as you direct.

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*Blowing Up Hitler: A Life of Johann Georg Elser, Would-Be Assassin* by Gerald Williams. $5.95 plus $1.50 postage.

*Liberty 1881-1908: A Comprehensive Index* by Wendy McElroy. $30 plus $3 postage. Complete microfiche edition of *Liberty* sells for $25, plus $1.50 postage. As a set, both can be ordered for $51.50, postage included.

*Benjamin R. Tucker and the Champions of Liberty: A Centenary Anthology.* $15 plus $4 postage.

Little Blue Books — I have an extensive collection of these famous books from Girard, Kansas. Write for a list.

Michael Coughlin
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## *All-American Anarchist: Joseph A. Labadie and the Labor Movement*

by Carlotta Anderson

This is a brilliant biography of a major figure in American anarchist history. Here's what Edward C. Weber says about this book: "Carlotta Anderson presents candidly a human being, romantically idealistic, whose passionate convictions carried him beyond conventional social limits and involved him in many controversies, both in his labor activities and in his career as a social agitator. The 'Gentle Anarchist' was by no means always pacifistic or measured in speech and writing; his hyperboles and misjudgements are noted with Anderson's objective eye and a relish of humor."

*

Paul Avrich notes that it is "Beautifully written and meticulously researched, it captures not only his colorful personality but also the flavor of the times in which he lived."

*

From Freedom Press comes this evaluation: "His life was interesting and important, and Carlotta Anderson's account of it is well-researched and well-written. Although she never knew him — she was only two when he died — she successfully conveys the character of her eccentric ancestor and the atmosphere of the American left a century ago, and her book will stand as one of the best biographies not just of an American but of any anarchist."

The book is available from Wayne State University Press, The Leonard N. Simons Bldg., 4809 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, MI 48201-1309. It costs 34.95 plus $3 shipping. Folks living in Michigan should add 6% sales tax and those in Canada need to send 7% general sales tax as well. It is also available at bookstores and Amazon.com, an on-line book service.

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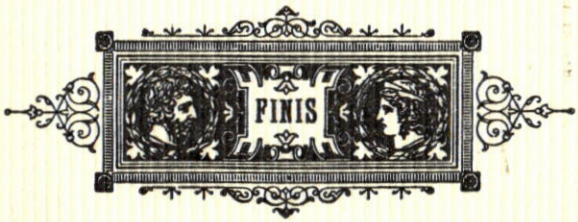
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